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Press Release
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SECRETARY-GENERAL, CONCERNED BY RISING TENSIONS IN EAST TIMOR, CALLS FOR CESSATION OF ALL MILITARY ACTIVITY

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

The Secretary-General is concerned by the rising tensions in East Timor. In particular, he is disturbed by reports of armed clashes in the Territory and by remarks which have been attributed to local officials and appear to have provoked large-scale protests in the last few days.

The Secretary-General would like to underline that, in view of the important opportunities that have been created for a resolution of the question of East Timor through the negotiations under his auspices, and the commendable efforts being made by Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, the Apostolic Administrator of Dili, and others to foster tolerance and peace in East Timor, it is incumbent on all parties concerned to avoid taking steps that could jeopardize or unnecessarily complicate the delicate efforts to find a just settlement to this long running dispute. He calls for a cessation of all military activity and for a substantial reduction of the Indonesian military presence in the Territory.

Following the latest Senior Officials' Meeting between Indonesia and Portugal, held in New York from 6 to 8 October 1998 under the chairmanship of his Personal Representative, Jamsheed Marker, the Secretary-General intends to further intensify his consultations with East Timorese leaders with a view to ensuring their active involvement in the negotiating process.

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